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Kent on Sunday

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East edition No 745

ENTERTAINMENT

That looks familiar!

County takes centre stage in top dramas

HISTORY

Spotlight on Dad's Navy

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Let's get healthy in our level of debate in 2017

THERE is something refreshing about the dawning of a new year.

It is, firstly, a chance to return to some sort of normality after a hectic festive season; to reclaim our homes and workplaces from amid a sea of tinsel and twinkling lights.

But, perhaps most importantly, it provides an opportunity to draw a line under what has gone before. To embark on something of a fresh start with a new year defining that change.

Depending on your political persuasion, 2016 was either one to remember due to the success of Trump and Brexit - or to induce panic about the state of humanity due to, well, the success of Trump and Brexit.

One thing many have raised in reflections on a quite remarkable year is our increasing desire to ignore the so-called 'experts' and instead simply go on gut instinct.

While a scepticism about information from

all sources is often healthy - we should, after all, be aware of what motivates all such announcements - to simply dismiss anything to support a counter argument to a belief we hold is both short-sighted and potentially dangerous.

We live in a democracy and one which puts free speech at the very heart of all we hold dear. Therefore it is essential we do entertain alternative views; that we absorb them and adjust our outlook accordingly.

To encourage huge swathes of people - many disillusioned by the so-called establishment - to ignore and ridicule them could lead us into perilous waters.

So perhaps our resolution for 2017 could be a fresh start on how we combat differing opinions and that we do not allow extreme views to go unchallenged because we're told to ignore dissenting voices but instead engage in healthy and diverse debate.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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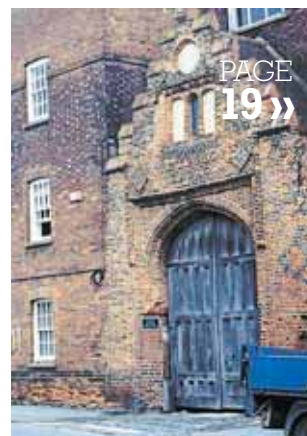
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Retailers hint at sales slump over Christmas

By Adele Couchman
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RETAILERS across the county have reported a mixed reaction in the number of shoppers venturing out in what is traditionally the busiest time of year in the shopping calendar - with some reporting a decrease in footfall during this year's Boxing Day sales.

Figures show that Boxing Day sales fell 6.7 per cent on last year for UK retailers, suggesting that the incentive to buy in the sales has weakened following widespread discounting including Black Friday and Cyber Monday that continued well into December.

Centre manager for Hempstead Valley in Gillingham Mark Rumfitt echoed concerns that the lure of pre-Christmas sales contributed to a drop in shoppers during the final week of the holiday season.

"We saw 160,000 people in the week before Christmas - our biggest record for that period.

"Our Boxing Day sales were busy, but with so many discounts before Christmas following from Black Friday, our post-Christmas sale period is flatter than expected."



DIP: Boxing Day sales have seen a drop in shoppers with pre-Christmas events like Black Friday

Centre manager for Fremlin Walk in Maidstone Lloyd Wright also reported a slight drop in Boxing Day shoppers.

He said: "It seems fair to say that footfall was slightly down on Boxing Day - but sales were up.

He added: "We believe boxing day revenue was driven by increased sale promotions; with some retailers increasing their 50 per cent off pre-Christmas sales to 70 per cent on Boxing Day.

Meanwhile, other retailers in the county reported a boom in sales during the period between Christmas and new year.

Westwood Cross in Broadstairs saw thousands heading to the shops to pick up a bargain, with six times as many crowds on Boxing Day.

Shoppers were queuing outside Next from 3am, where the store was greeted by 400 shoppers by the time it opened three hours later.

Westwood Cross marketing manager Sarah Goodman said:

"By 8.30am on Boxing Day, the car park was 70 per cent full.

"That's amazingly different to a normal Monday morning, where we would normally see 10 per cent of spaces taken at that time."

Despite a fall in sales, Boxing Day shoppers are still predicted to have gone on a £3.85 billion bargain hunt.

Fundraising launched after Boxing Day fire leaves family homeless

MULTIPLE fundraising campaigns have been launched after a Sheppey family lost their home to a devastating fire on Boxing Day.

Six fire engines were required to scale down the blaze at a bungalow in Highfield Road in Minster-on-Sea after it broke out just before 3pm.

Now the family have been left homeless, kindhearted friends and neighbours have started numerous JustGiving pages which have already raised thousands of pounds for the family.

Neighbour Neil Thomkins has started a crowdfunding page aiming to raise £5,000 to help the occupants rebuild.

It reads: "We're raising £5,000 to my good friends have had a house fire on Boxing Day and have lost everything. All they have left is the clothes they stand."

"I am planning to use any funds raised to help them replace everything they have lost."

Another fundraising campaign

has been launched by Rosetta Lord, which has already raised over £1,400.

She said: "My mum and step dad were on their way to my family's Boxing Day gathering.

"As they arrived they got a phone call from a neighbour informing them that their house was on fire. "When they returned home they were faced with their road blocked off and six fire engines.

"Everything from the house has been destroyed and all our childhood memories that we can never get back."

Carole Knight is also hoping to provide the family a further £1,000.

Kent Fire and Rescue remained at the scene for four hours, where the fire is thought to have started when the occupants were out.

Alternative accommodation is being found for them, and the cause of the fire is not yet known.

At the time of writing, some £2,000 has been raised.

Pedestrian dies in Christmas Eve hit and run in Dartford

A MAN in his 20s died on Christmas Eve after he was hit by a car.

The pedestrian, from Tyne and Wear, was crossing the road in Crossways Boulevard, Dartford, at around 6pm when he was struck by a black Vauxhall Corsa. The man died at the scene.

Police traced the vehicle to Bexleyheath and two people from

Dartford were arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving, failing to stop at the scene of a collision and perverting the course of justice.

A 22-year-old man and a 20-year-old woman have been bailed until May 1 pending further enquiries.

Anyone with information should call 01622 798538.

Questions from Folkestone MP over Wiggins package

FOLKESTONE MP Damian

Collins has questioned a package that was given to Sir Bradley Wiggins in the wake of his retirement on Wednesday.

But what Wiggins thought would be a glorious goodbye was overshadowed by suspicions raised over a package delivered to Wiggins and Team Sky at the end of the 2011 Critérium du Dauphiné

- a race won by Wiggins.

Although Team Sky principal Sir Dave Brailsford told a department of culture, media and sport select committee last week the package contained a relatively cheap over the counter decongestant, Mr Collins - the chairman of the committee - said "more new questions seem to be thrown up" about the drugs.



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Burglars steal shotguns in Allington burglary

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after thieves reportedly stole shotguns, watches and jewellery in a Christmas Eve burglary.

The burglary is reported to have taken place at a home in Nightingale Road, off the A20 at Allington, near Maidstone, on Saturday, December 24, between midday and 9pm.

Three luxury watches, some jewellery and three

shotguns are reported to have been taken.

Anyone with information is asked to call Kent Police on 01622 604100 quoting YY/29146/16.

Following the Christmas period, Kent Police have warned people to dispose of wrapping and boxes outside their homes carefully to protect themselves from the unwanted attention of burglars and thieves.



SEARCH: Fishing boat capsizes

Fisherman dies after Belgian boat capsizes

ONE of the two rescued fishermen who disappeared after their boat capsized several miles of Ramsgate on Tuesday night has died.

A major search and rescue operation by the UK Coastguard was undertaken on Wednesday, but was called off by the time of writing due to poor light conditions.

One person was winched to safety from the Belgian-registered boat and taken to hospital, and later a second crew member was also rescued from the water – but died in hospital. The third remains unaccounted for.

Lifeboats from Ramsgate and Harwich, the Coastguard search and rescue helicopter based at Lydd and the Coastguard Rescue Team from Margate were all sent out during the search.

A spokesperson said teams had spent the entire day searching approximately 20 miles north east of Ramsgate.

Duty controller for the UK Coastguard Kaimes Beasley said on Wednesday: "This has been an extensive and comprehensive search of the area."

"We are standing down the search this evening because of the fading light. It is unlikely that the search will resume in the morning, unless we get further information that will help us find the third crew member."

Swaleside prison officers praised for bravery in recent prisoner take over

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

THE BRAVERY of the prison officers who dealt with the recent take over of the HMP Swaleside on the Isle of Sheppey, has been commended by the Prison Officers Association (POA).

General secretary of the POA Steve Gillan said: "I am told that had it not been for the bravery of our colleagues at Swaleside in securing the prison then things would have been far worse."

"On behalf of the National Executive Committee, I pay tribute to everyone involved from the National Tactical Response Group, Tornado teams, and the Swaleside staff for their professionalism and keeping the public and each other safe."

A police investigation has been launched following the incident, which saw 60 prisoners take control of a landing on a wing at the category B training prison shortly before 7pm on December 23.



CONDEMNED: HMP Swaleside

All those involved were returned to their cells by 1am.

POA chairman Mike Rolfe said fires had been lit during the incident and the specially trained Tornado squads were drafted in to help quell

the trouble.

The disturbance was confined to a landing on a single wing and the rest of the prison was secure, the Prison Service said.

It was the fourth major disturbance at an English prison in less than two months, coming a week after hundreds of inmates rioted at Birmingham prison.

HMP Swaleside has a capacity of around 1,100 inmates serving prison terms of more than four years.

Swaleside was condemned by the HM Inspectorate of Prisons (HMIP) in July, which described it in a report as "dangerous", with levels of violence that were "far too high" and many incidents of a serious nature.

Mr Gillan commented: "The Government's own statistics demonstrate the service is in crisis. Staffing is at a critical level in many of our jails."

"We will continue to push forward our agenda on Health and Safety and to try to get pension justice and a proper remuneration for our hard working and over stretched members."

Ambulances struggle with festive demand

SOUTH East Coast Ambulance Service asked people to only call an ambulance in the worst cases as it struggled to meet demand on Boxing Day.

In a statement, the trust said it was under pressure with a high volume of calls and asked people to stick mainly to life or death cases when calling Kent's emergency ambulances.

The trust has seen a 10 per cent increase in demand compared to last year.

Richard Webber, the trust's on-call strategic incident commander, said on Monday: "The public can help us by avoid calling us for non-life-threatening emergencies and seek alternative treatment from other healthcare providers or if you do require hospital treatment look to make your own way there."

"We'd like to remind people to only dial 999 in a serious emergency and remember the other options available, such as NHS 111, which we run in partnership across Kent, Surrey and Sussex."

Farage given finger at Boxing Day Hunt

AN anti-hunt protester gave Nigel Farage a frosty welcome when the former UKIP leader turned out to support the Boxing Day Hunt near his Kent home.

The member of the Hunt Saboteurs managed to take a picture of himself sticking a middle finger up at Farage, who attended the Old Surrey and Burstow and West Kent Hunt at Chiddingstone Castle near Edenbridge.

Mr Farage, who lives near Westerham, appeared in good spirits as he posed for cameras enjoying a pre-11am pint in a pair of yellow trousers.

The MEP is a regular at the mass hunting event – one of the biggest in the fox hunting calendar – despite a recent poll showing that 84 per cent of the country supports the ban.

It is estimated that 300 hunts happened on Boxing Day this year, with hunters claiming to abide by the law by having hounds follow a scent rather than a fox.

The Hunting Act was introduced in 2004 and outlaws the pursuit of animals with dogs.

More Southern strike misery in new year

WITH 2016 seeing one of the worst rail strikes in a generation, even more Southern walkouts are scheduled over the next year.

Rail passengers are set to endure misery in the coming weeks, as drivers from both the Aslef and RMT unions continue strikes over six days in January – from Monday, January 9, through to Saturday, January 14).

Passengers are being advised to expect a severely reduced and disrupted service every day while the industrial action is in place – including routes from near Tonbridge, and Ashford International.

The long-running stand-off is centred on the train operator's plans to introduce driver-only trains, which is opposed by unions.

Although both unions claim that giving drivers the sole responsibility for operating train doors is dangerous, Govia Thameslink – the parent company of Southern – dispute any safety risks and have branded the industrial action as "unjustified and unprecedented".

Taking force progress into 2017

By Matthew Scott

Kent's police and crime commissioner

FOR the past seven months it has been an honour and privilege to service the people of Kent and Medway as your police and crime commissioner.

I am acutely aware that I am writing this article at Christmas time and so firstly I wish to offer all the police officers and staff, as well as other emergency service workers, who will be working over Christmas and new year my most sincere thanks.

I know from family experience that both they and their families will be anxious for a safe return home so that they can celebrate with their children and loved ones.

I am very grateful for their continued dedication to protecting us all from harm all year round.

In these first seven months, I have worked hard to implement some of the promises that I made to the electorate in my manifesto.

Kent Police is recruiting more officers and PCSOs. Victims of crime are getting faster and more tailored support, particularly in response to more traumatic events.

The Volunteer Police Cadets programme is returning for young people. Investment has been made in new technology to support frontline



REFLECTION: Police and crime commissioner Matthew Scott looks back on his seven months in office so far

policing and 101 call-waiting times are starting to come down.

Progress has also been made on the backlog of firearms licences.

Mental health remains a key issue for policing and one of my top priorities.

Around a third of all Kent Police time is spent dealing with cases involving mental health, even though that is not the right thing for vulnerable people because officers are not trained as health professionals.

I continue to raise awareness of this important issue and have secured funding from the government to create new places of

safety for people in crisis.

I am also supporting mental health projects in the county that will reduce the pressure on police officers.

2016 has been an interesting year in many respects, but a positive one in the main for Kent Police.

I congratulate Kent Police again for being considered "Outstanding" by their independent inspectors for legitimacy and public confidence.

In fact, they are the only force to have received this two years in a row. The force is "Good" in nearly all other areas it is assessed on.

This is not an easy achievement

and is a reflection of the hard-work and commitment shown by the force on a daily basis. The officers and staff are all to be congratulated.

Next year will see the publication of a new police and crime plan, which will set the priorities for the chief constable to deliver for the next four years.

This will have been produced in consultation with the public, and I am grateful for the 1,700 responses I received.

I am working on a new restorative justice service, which will support victims and help reduce re-offending.

I will also be looking to invest in new community safety projects and mental health programmes that will support policing.

I've started building relationships between the PCC's office and others and have travelled extensively across the county to meet with local MPs, councils, charities and local organisations.

I've also worked with councillors, of all different political parties including some of my former opponents, on local issues.

Of the many very positive engagements I've undertaken in my first seven months my personal highlight was meeting the author of the first piece of correspondence I received as PCC.

This was from four-year-old Samir who wanted to know why there were no police trains. He even drew a design for me of what a Kent Police Train could look like.

I got to meet him and talk to his friends about what the police does, and importantly that they are there to keep them safe.

Finally, to all residents in the county, I hope you have a Happy New Year. I look forward to meeting more of you as I continue my programme of public engagements in 2017 and please do not hesitate to contact me if there is anything I can do to assist.


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Sgt Wilson's rollercoaster life behind scenes of comedy hit

As Dad's Army celebrates 40 years since its final episode, we speak to the widow and son on one of its memorable stars, John Le Mesurier, who lived in Ramsgate

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

REMARKABLY, 2017 will be the 40th anniversary of the end of comedy classic Dad's Army - a show which continues to be aired on primetime BBC channels to this day.

And as millions continue to settle down to watch the antics of Captain Mainwaring and his bungling troop of Home Guard, for many it is the amiable ladies' man Arthur Wilson who remains one of the show's most endearing characters.

Portrayed by actor John Le Mesurier, Kent was both home and refuge from a lengthy acting career.

He lived in a property in London Road, Ramsgate - which today bears a blue plaque in his honour - and was known to frequent local bars, often in the company of his Dad's Army co-stars.

Yet his personal life was far from simple.

Amid filming roles in a host of mov-

ies and TV shows, he was married three times and had two children. His first marriage crumbled after wife June suffered from alcoholism, his second to Carry On star Hattie Jacques when she had an affair (at one stage moving her lover into the family home), and his third nearly hit the rocks when wife Joan had a torrid affair with legendary comedian Tony Hancock - a close friend of the Dad's Army star.

But his affection amid the public was only strengthened by his role in the war time saga and he continued to work right up until his death.

Speaking to KoS from his home in California, the actor's son, Robin, who has worked in the music industry since moving to New York as a teenager, explained: "You couldn't stop him working unless he was unwell."

"I was living in Los Angeles, and still do, so I didn't get to see him or Joan that much. But I used to visit when I had a little time."

"I know he loved the house he and Joan had on London Road. And he enjoyed going to the local for a drink as

the locals wouldn't bother him. The last time I saw him was a short time before he died, but he still had that dry wit even from his hospital bed."

Born in 1912 in Bedford to a lawyer father Charles, and mother Amy, the unusual and often mispronounced surname comes from his mother's roots in Alderney, one of the Channel Islands. The family moved to Bury St Edmunds, and John was sent to boarding school at Grenham House in Minnis Bay, Birchington.

A spell working with his father led to amateur dramatics and he was hooked.

In 1933, time at the Fay Compton Studio of Dramatic Art led to a lifetime friendship with fellow-student Alec Guinness, and his first stage appearance in Edinburgh and television in 1938.

War came and he was made a captain in India until being demobbed in 1946. Two years later, he made his first movies. Death in the Hand and Escape from Broadmoor.

And then his life became complex and tangled.

His first marriage in 1940 to direc-



tor June Melville ended as she sank in to alcoholism, and as they divorced in 1949 he married Carry On star Hattie Jacques, who herself was born in Sandgate, after a two-year affair.

They had sons Kim, who tragically died in 1991, and Robin.

Meanwhile, Mr Le Mesurier and Ms Jacques teamed up with Tony Hancock for the radio series Educating Archie.

Mr Pritchard said: "John was a major jazz fan and loved to visit places like Ronnie Scott's with James Beck, who played Joe Walker in Dad's Army."

It was also a favourite haunt with Mr Hancock, and Mr Le Mesurier eventually joined Hancock's Half



Hour in 1956, after several more film roles.

But it was in 1968 that Dad's Army started and he became a household name earning £260 per episode.

Tony Pritchard, secretary of the Dad's Army Appreciation Society, explained: "He was a true gentleman and a real smoothy."

"John was surprised when he read the pilot episode that he was not cast

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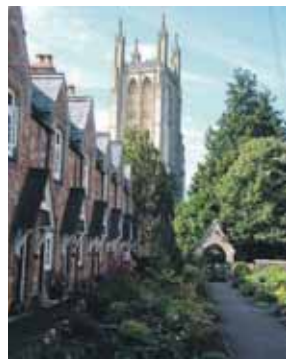
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LOCATION: Caught on camera during on-location filming at Thetford, in Norfolk, John Le Mesurier and the cast of the BBC show. He attended school in Birchington and lived and died in Ramsgate.



as the officer, as he usually was. It came to pass that he was originally thought of to play the captain, and Arthur Lowe the sergeant, but an inspired change of roles gave the programme some of its funniest elements, as the gallant captain played

the game of one-upmanship with his socially superior sergeant."

Mr Le Mesurier admitted he based the character on himself, writing: "I thought, why not just be myself, use an extension of my own personality and behave rather as I had done in

the army? So I always left a button or two undone, and had the sleeve of my battle dress slightly turned up. I spoke softly, issued commands as if they were invitations, the sort not likely to be accepted, and generally assumed a benign air of helplessness."

Dad's Army saw nine series over nine years including 80 episodes.

Other major roles saw him win a Bafta for his portrayal of a spy in *Traitor* while he also appeared in sex comedies *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* and *Au Pair Girls*.

And while Arthur Lowe voiced the Mr Men children's cartoon, so Mr Le Mesurier was the voice of popular children's series *Bod*.

Hattie Jacques had an affair with her driver in 1962 and even moved him in to their marital home, while Mr Le Mesurier was confined to the attic room.

A year later, he met Joan Malin, raised in Broadstairs, at Peter Cook's Establishment Club, Soho, famous for its jazz and satirical performances.

They married in 1966 with Mr Le Mesurier taking the blame for divorce so Ms Jacques didn't get any negative publicity.

A year later, however, Joan started an affair with Tony Hancock, but his violent alcoholism forced her back to Ramsgate, and the forgiving arms of her husband. Mr Hancock committed suicide in 1968 after battling depression and alcoholism.

Joan Le Mesurier told us: "It was a complicated time with a lot of personal relationships moving around, but we did all remain terribly good friends."

"I was good friends with Hattie and it was she who engineered my meeting with John."

"Because she was having an affair with a very handsome chap, who was her driver, she felt really guilty about this and she wanted to find someone for John."

"She kind of engineered a little party and I went along there quite inno-

cently and met John. One thing led to another and we became very good friends."

"It was a long time before we became anything else. Hattie became a very close, dear friend of mine."

"John and Hattie were friends with Tony and even after that didn't go well, we all still spoke. We all just got on, including my previous husband and his new wife. We all grew like tree branches together. There was no acrimony between us - we didn't do that."

"All this was a long time ago now, and I do look back fondly on it but it was a tragic time when Tony [Hancock] killed himself."

"Now I am 85 and after living in Spain for seven years when John died, and am now back in Ramsgate to be with my family."

In the earlier 1980s, Mr Le Mesurier became seriously ill with cirrhosis of the liver and eventually hospitalised a year later in Ramsgate Hospital. The 71-year-old told Joan: "It has been rather lovely" and slipped into a coma before he died on November 15, 1983.

Prior to his death, he had asked his wife, Joan, to post a death notice in the Times which read simply: "John Le Mesurier wishes it to be known that he conked out on November 15. He sadly misses his family and friends."

He was cremated and his ashes buried at the church of St George the Martyr, Church Hill, Ramsgate.

His epitaph reads: "John Le Mesurier. Much loved actor. Resting" along with one to his son Kim.

A blue plaque was placed on his home at 8 London Road, Ramsgate in 2010 and unveiled by Joan.

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Giving hope for children bearing cost of conflict

The Bishop of Rochester writes for us about the importance of salvation and remaining strong in uncertain times

New Year Message

Rt Rev James Langstaff

IN the Christian calendar, New Year's Day is also the day on which the Church remembers the naming of Mary's son.

The gospel story tells us that he is given the name 'Jesus', which means 'God saves'. And that word which we translate as 'saves' is all about God's action in bringing about reconciliation, healing, wholeness, justice and hope.

Importantly, it is about God making it possible for we humans to come close to God – knowing God; and it is also about the healing of our relationships with one another at all levels.

I'm not very good at New Year resolutions, so I don't usually make them. But this year, as we stand at the change of the years, I do find myself with some serious hopes, longings and prayers – as well as, if I am honest, a good many fears and anxieties.

The centre of my longing and my prayer is for that 'salvation' for the world which is what the name 'Jesus'

is about.

As I write this, the last so-called 'rebels' (including thousands of innocent non-combatants, including many children) are being removed from Aleppo; who knows where things will be by the time you read this.

I'm reminded that on December 28, the Christian calendar had another festival, that of the Holy Innocents. This marks the story in Matthew's gospel of King Herod killing many young children as he seeks to kill the child, Jesus.

Not only in Aleppo, but in so many other places across the world it is the children who bear the cost of human conflict.

We hear of young boys and girls being forced into bearing arms; young women kidnapped and raped; schools destroyed, and hopes of education with them; children becoming migrants and refugees, travelling thousands of miles in the hope of safety, and often with no close adult to care for them.

I still worry about my children sometimes – and they're in their thir-



HOPE: The Bishop of Rochester writes exclusively for KoS in a special new year message:

Picture: ADY KERRY

ties now. What about an eight-year old who has no close adult left, and may even be caring for a younger sibling as well? Whatever the reasons behind the conflicts, the suffering of children is a scar on the whole human race.

And so it is heart-warming when one encounters good things being done for children.

I visit a lot of prisons in my national role as Bishop to HM Prisons. We hear lots of bad news stories about our prisons – here's a good new one.

One estimate is that 65 per cent of boys who have a father in prison will

go on to offend themselves. At the same time, children of prisoners are twice as likely as other children to have behaviour and mental health problems, and they are less likely to do well at school. There are some great initiatives working with the children of prisoners, but one in particular has inspired me recently.

At HMP Parc in South Wales, they have a range of approaches to help imprisoned fathers stay in touch with their children. For example, they have built links with schools in the area and have events when the child, their other parent and their teacher come into prison to talk about the child's education.

Alongside this, children can come into prison for homework club, with their dad helping them with the homework. They even have a Scout group where the children come into prison for their Scout meeting, with the dads acting as helpers.

The evidence is becoming clear that the children are doing better at school (and will thus be less likely to offend themselves), that the dads are taking their parental responsibility seriously, and even that dads in the programme are less likely to re-offend when released – and apart from anything else that saves you and me a lot of taxpayer's money. And that is all part of 'salvation' – the healing of lives in damaged families.

That is one example of an initiative which brings the hope of new possibilities.

In this new year, I'm one of the sponsors for a national initiative called Prison Hope. This intends to spread good ideas about how we can bring hope for prisoners, victims of crime, and communities affected by crime.

It is about encouraging local initiatives up and down the country, especially through building better links between prison chaplaincies and their local church and wider communities. At a time when the situation in many prisons is pretty bleak, we want to bring hope – and that too is part of 'salvation', for individuals, families and wider society.

And what of salvation for the wider world, that world in which the children of Aleppo and elsewhere are so badly done by?

Whatever your position on Brexit, or on the election of Mr Trump in the US, there can be no denying that the world community is facing change and uncertainty in this coming year.

Relationships between and within powerful nations and groups of nations – the US, Russia, China, Europe, the Middle East – are shifting and we do not know what that will mean.

In October, I found myself on the edge of the Italian earthquake zone when a series of powerful tremors came. It was unnerving as we felt the earth literally shifting beneath us. In our world today, huge shifts are going on. That brings anxiety for many of us, but we pray that there may come a new 'settling' as the pieces take up their new positions – as after a physical earthquake.

So as a Christian, I am hoping and praying for all that is meant by the name 'Jesus'. For God's salvation to come in the healing of the nations; the bringing of justice and belonging for children who suffer, especially through war; the healing of damaged families and communities. And I pray also for each of us, that we know this at the personal level of a fuller and richer relationship with God and with those around us.



CONFLICT: Children are suffering in war torn Aleppo in Syria,

Picture: PA

Who do you think you are kidding Mr Napoleon? Meet Dad's Navy

Before the Home Guard, the county's coastline had a last line of protection against French invasion in the Sea Fencibles, an odd-ball band of young and old alike who would tackle foreign forces

By David McDine

editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

DAD'S Army repeats on television still make popular viewing, but few who laugh at their antics are aware that the Home Guard's naval equivalent was prepared to resist invasion more than 200 years ago.

They were the Sea Fencibles, an odd-ball band of fishermen, boatmen and other inhabitants aged from 15 to 60 of Kent's seaside towns and villages 'as shall voluntarily offer themselves for the defence of the coast'.

If the French had managed to evade the Royal Navy and invade our front-line county in the Napoleonic era, they would have been opposed by these Dad's Navy men of the time.

All Napoleon needed was control of the Channel in order to launch his boastfully-named 'Army of England' against the Kent coast.

He himself said: "It is necessary for us to be masters of the sea for six hours only and England will have ceased to exist."

A humorous contemporary print shows some of the feared invasion methods; troop-filled barges, infantry and artillery coming through an early version of the Channel Tunnel, and air attacks – shades of things that were to come – using hot air balloons and kites.

The invasion threat was so real that in 1798 Sea Fencible detachments were established around the coast. Kent's were divided into eight districts: Hythe, Folkestone, Dover, Deal, Sandwich, Margate, Whitstable and Faversham.

They were a naval militia, the brainchild of the peculiarly-named Captain, later Rear Admiral, Sir Home Riggs Popham, a controversial, scientifically-minded officer known to some in the service as 'a damned cunning fellow'.

Fencible is a corruption of defencible, a part-timer who trained in his spare time to defend his home area when invasion threatened.

They were commanded by regular Royal Navy officers and paid a shilling a day when they took time out from their normal jobs to train with muskets, pikes and cannon to defend the coast.

Most importantly, they were given a protection that exempted them from sea service. Without it, many would most certainly have been grabbed by the Navy's press gangs.

The plan was that if invasion barges managed to cross the Channel the Sea Fencibles would attack them with gunboats and shore batteries before the French could land.

Their secondary role was to 'attack and annoy' small French privateers and retake any vessels that may have fallen into enemy hands.

The invasion threat never materi-



ATTACK: A painting depicting the various forms of Channel attack. Inset, author David McDine

alised, but the French privateers did and were a constant menace. They were armed vessels owned and officered by private persons who were given commissions known as 'letters of marque' from the French government to prey on British merchant shipping.

In effect, the privateers were licensed pirates. But whenever possible our Sea Fencibles saw them off.

One of their most successful encounters took place off the North Foreland in 1799 when two merchantmen were boarded and taken by the French. But, the officer commanding Margate district reported: "the moment the capture was perceived 40 or 50 of the Sea Fencibles pushed off in three boats and near three o'clock recaptured the two brigs, the privateer having made off."

Kent, being first stop on the invasion coast, was an armed camp throughout the revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars and it fell to the Lord Lieutenant and his deputies to organise and muster the local defence forces.

Along with the militia and volunteers, the Sea Fencibles appear in the lists drawn up by Kent's deputy lieutenants to ensure that every man had a role in defending our county and the nation.

Those considered unable to fight

were instructed to turn up with a horse and cart, axe, spade – 'or whatever useful thing they could bring'. Some were instructed to be ready to ferry supplies or livestock away from the coast, others to help throw up defences.

No doubt they included the equivalents of 'stupid boy' Private Pike and bumbling Lance Corporal Jones, and

Captain Schomberg, who commanded the Dungeness Fencibles complained that his men were 'mostly smugglers and wreckers' and not available when required.

But Nelson had a more optimistic view. Before Trafalgar, he was based at Deal commanding the anti-invasion forces in the Channel and had overall command of the Sea Fenci-

bles. He said: "The men, I believe, will come forth when the country prepares for fighting and all business stands still."

Kent's Sea Fencibles were disbanded at the signing of the Treaty of Amiens in 1802, but reinstated when war broke out again in 1803 and served on until 1810, by which time all likelihood of invasion had long passed.

TALES OF ADVENTURE BASED ON THE FENCIBLES

KENT author David McDine got the idea for his new naval adventure novel about the county's Sea Fencibles while researching his factual book *Unconquered – The Story of Kent and its Lieutenantancy*.

He recalls: "Little had been written or was known about this Dad's Navy of its day, but I found the whole idea of part-time seaside flotsam like them taking on the might of Napoleon totally fascinating."

The result is *The Normandy Privateer*, the story of Lieutenant Oliver Anson and his two companions who are wounded and captured during an abortive cutting-out raid on the French coast.

They escape and back in



England end up running a ragtag detachment of Sea Fencibles on the Kent coast training to see off French invasion attempts.

The author is a former Royal Naval Reserve officer and Ministry of Defence Chief Information Officer, appointed a Deputy Lieutenant of Kent in 2006.

He says: "Most characters are entirely fictional, although based to some degree on people I have come across in all three services over the years. Weapons, uniforms and conditions of service may have changed dramatically since the Napoleonic era, but the cheerful, courageous, indomitable spirit and sense of humour of British service personnel lives on."

■ The Normandy Privateer is published by Endeavour Press and is available via Amazon as an e-book at £2.99 and paperback at £8.99.

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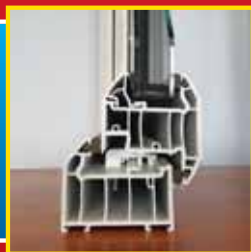
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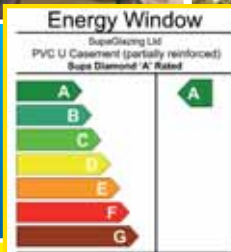
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Lights, camera, action: County sets the scene in top dramas

Once again, some of the biggest television and film crews used Kent's scenic landscape as their backdrop in 2016. We look back at the best shows and movies to appear on our screens this year...

AS WELL as being a quite incredible year of news in Kent, the film scene in 2016 also proved to be one of the biggest yet. While county stars graced our screens on popular reality shows like The Apprentice and The Great British Bake Off, some of the most picturesque locations across the area were captured by film and television cameras.

Kent this year featured in some of the biggest Hollywood blockbusters, BBC period dramas, crime thrillers plus music videos by huge pop stars including Emeli Sande and Robbie Wil-

liams - who rushed to the aid of a starstruck fan after crashing her car in shock at seeing the former Take That singer in Leysdown.

Not to mention the seemingly annual visit from BBC crews at Question Time, Secret Britain and the Antiques Roadshow, which visited Folkestone, the Hoo Peninsula and Ightham Mote respectively this year, while Maidstone Studios continued to welcome a range of shows, including the popular Take Me Out on ITV and the BBC's Later...with Jools Holland.

Here is a list of ten of the biggest productions filmed in Kent that appeared on our screens this year.

HUNTED

KENT provided the backdrop in a second series of Channel 4's real life chase thriller Hunted, which follows 10 ordinary people trying to remain hidden from a team of professional hunters for 28 days to win a share of £100,000.

The two remaining fugitives hid out in Tunbridge Wells and Sittingbourne the night before the final day of the challenge as the hunters tried to pin them down with information obtained from members of the public in exchange for cash.

The contestants still at large on the final day needed to reach a secret 'extraction point' which turned out to be a boat moored on the Isle of Sheppey.



THE CROWN

CREWS visited Chatham's Historic Dockyard this year for filming in one of the most expensive TV series ever produced.

A Netflix original ten-part historical drama series, believed to be produced at a cost of some £100m, The Crown follows the reign of the young and newly-wed Queen Elizabeth II.

Starring Claire Foy as the lead, who also featured in Wolf Hall, filmed at Kent's Penshurst Place, it explores revelations from Westminster and Buckingham Palace as the Queen forges a relationship with Sir



Winston Churchill during the dissolution of the British Empire.

Production teams filmed a dockside scene on Anchor Wharf in Medway after building part of the side of a ship, and also filmed on HMS Cavalier as part of a home movie shoot the royal family had taken.

The dockyard, which dates back to the 17th century and contains more than 100 buildings from the Georgian and Victorian periods, has previously featured on screen in Suffragette, Downton Abbey and Les Misérables.

HUMANS

SEASON two of the Channel 4 sci-fi drama, Humans, set in a parallel present universe, rolled into Thanet this year.

The second series explores how the latest family gadgets, highly-developed robotic servants called Synths affect and transform human lives, not always for the better.

It follows the missing Niska, played by Emily Berrington who has appeared in The Inbetweeners 2 movie, and her fellow Synths trying to locate her amid an environment of erratic behaviour.

Its award-winning first series attracted an average of 4.8 million viewers, becoming Channel 4's highest rated drama in 20 years.

Production teams visited the district between April and June, at locations including West Bay Cafe in Westgate-on-Sea, Piggy Bank nursery in Birchington, Botany Bay in Broadstairs and Cliftonville's Norfolk Road.



RUSTOM

A Hindi thriller inspired by the real life story of Indian Navy Commander Kawas Manekshaw Nanavati who was tried for killing his English-born wife's lover, Rustom was filmed across the county and brought £500,000 to the economy, according to council chiefs.

The 1959 murder case captured the public's attention because of the details and conflicting stories that came out during the trial.

Kent locations used in the production included Canterbury, Maidstone river path and County Hall, Leeds Castle, Aylesford, and The Historic Dockyard Chatham.

The film is directed by Dharmendra Suresh Desai, written by Vipul K. Rawal and stars Akshay Kumar, Ileana and Arjan Bajwa.

The Rustom production filmed on location in Kent in April during which KCC's Film Office assisted in finding suitable locations and arranging road closures.



DOCTOR STRANGE



NORTHFLEET'S industrial shoreline was used for a stunt sequence at the beginning of Sherlock star Benedict Cumberbatch's most recent film, Doctor Strange.

Based on a Marvel comic, the movie follows a neurosurgeon who sets out on a journey of healing after a car accident - filmed in the north Kent town - ruins his career, but ends up protecting the world from inter-dimensional threats.

Doctor Strange also stars the likes of Rachel McAdams, Bond villain Mads Mikkelsen and 12 Years a Slave star Chiwetel Ejiofor.

The wider Gravesend area has previously welcomed filming from The Interceptor, Don't Tell the Bride and Canterbury Tales - The Seacaptain's Tale.

THE HOLLOW CROWN: WARS OF THE ROSES



MR Cumberbatch was something of a regular visitor to the county in 2016, also starring in a BBC historical drama filmed at Tonbridge's Penshurst Place.

The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses tells the story of Richard III, played by the Sherlock star, and was broadcast in May during the commemorations to mark the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death.

Its celebrated British cast also included Dame Judi Dench, Hugh Bonneville and Sophie Okonedo.

Penshurst Place has strong connections with Shakespeare, with its medieval Baron's Hall believed to have been the inspiration for the stage design at The Globe Theatre.

It was also used as one of the filming locations for Henry V, part of the original Hollow Crown series in 2012.

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CALL THE MIDWIFE

DOUBLING up as the East End London streets, Chatham's Historic Dockyard was again used for the fifth series of popular Sunday night drama *Call the Midwife*, which aired at the start of the year.

The show is based on the memoirs of Jennifer Worth and this series picks up just before Easter when the nuns and midwives of Nonnatus House find themselves delivering a baby with severe deformities and struggling to help the parents understand and care for their child.

Narrated by Mission: Impossible's Vanessa Redgrave, the cast includes many familiar faces such as Helen George from *The Three Musketeers*, sitcom star Miranda Hart and Jenny Agutter, best known for the *Railway Children*.



CHURCHILL'S SECRET

MEOPHAM'S own Michael Gambon took on the role of Britain's wartime leader in *Churchill's Secret* on ITV earlier this year.

Set in 1953, the feature length drama tells the little known story of Winston Churchill's second time as prime minister when he suffered a life-threatening stroke, which is kept from the public.

Whilst his political peers plot his succession, family tensions surface when his long suffering wife, Clemmie, played by Lindsay Duncan, calls his children to visit him at his Westerham residence, Chartwell, where the drama was filmed.

Earlier this year, the National Trust launched a £7.1m appeal to ensure many of Churchill's personal items remain at the house.



THE ROYALS

ELIZABETH Hurley graced the county with her presence last year to star in American television drama series *The Royals*.

The show's second series picks up after the murder of King Simon by an unknown assailant, where his brother Cyrus has taken the throne after deeming the prince and princess illegitimate, with the help of the Queen to fabricate the paternity results.

Production of the drama made use of two locations in Kent: Allington Castle and Boughton Monchelsea Place,



which used its dining hall as well as orchards for the setting of a lavish picnic.

Boughton Monchelsea Place is a 16th century manor house set within 15 miles of countryside to the south of Maidstone, and has previously featured in 2007 thriller, *Half Broken Things*, and a variety of photoshoots.

Allington Castle, meanwhile, is privately owned and situated on the banks of the River Medway, and was previously on screen in *Mary Tudor* for BBC Education in 2005 and *The Zany Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1984.

THE TUNNEL: SABOTAGE



AFTER a successful first series filmed at a range of locations across Kent, Sky Atlantic's popular drama *The Tunnel: Sabotage* returned to the county for its second series.

Producers reclaimed their base at Discovery Park in Sandwich to re-unite unlikely Anglo-French detective duo Karl Roebuck, played by Stephen Dillane and Elise Wasserman, portrayed by Clémence Poésy.

The eight-part thriller kicks off with two seemingly isolated events; a plane crashing into the Channel, killing everyone on board and a French couple abducted from the Eurotunnel.

As well as the tunnel itself, filming also took place at Deal Pier, the Port of Dover, Sandwich Marina, Dover Castle, Folkestone Harbour, Westwood Industrial Estate in Margate, a range of locations in Canterbury among many other spots across the county.

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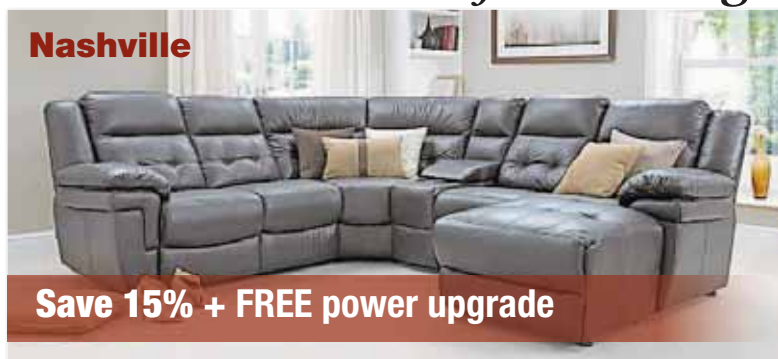
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Rise and fall of industrial capital

Though known for its agriculture, Kent was once a booming industrial hub. Author James Preston explains in his new book why the county's heritage is dying as developers target our brownfield sites

By Adele Couchman

adele.couchman@archant.co.uk

THINK of Kent, and the image of apples, cherries and sprawling green countryside immediately springs to mind.

Famous for its abundance of fruit-growing and hop gardens, it's all too easy to forget the county was once a booming industrial hub feeding the demands of the capital - making Kent the most industrialised area of south-east England outside London during the 19th century.

In a new book, Kent's Industrial Heritage, local historian James Preston explains the rise and fall of its often neglected industrial heritage.

He explains: "A lot of our old industrial sites are disappearing, so we should draw attention to what there is left of this part of our history before it goes."

Mr Preston has lectured in higher, further and adult education in history, industrial archaeology and industrial architecture and formerly taught at MidKent College.

He adds: "Nowadays, there's all the talk of wanting to be environmentally friendly, so these old industries are often looked upon as dirty."

"Coupled with the pressure to build so many houses on brownfield sites, what's left of Kent's industrial past really is at risk."

Despite much of the county remaining purely agricultural, the earliest knowledge of Kent's urban economy shows the county at the centre of production for the woollen and iron industries from the 14th to the 18th century.

"We had rural industries to start off with, with domestic duties carried out in the home like textiles."

"Then came the iron industry, which flourished during the 16th century in the Kentish weald, but all had closed by the 1760s in the face of coke-fuelled iron production elsewhere," he explains.

The woollen textile industry became established in Cranbrook in 1331, where the area produced broadcloth - a fine, high-quality luxury cloth of a minimum 28 yards in length - much of which was exported via Blackwell Hall in London - centre of the wool and cloth trade.

But when technology developed and it was cheaper to make wool in places like Gloucestershire and West Riding of Yorkshire, the Kent woollen textile industry declined rapidly in the 18th century.

The iron industry would also flourish in the Weald during the late 16th century, where iron ore was available from the Hastings beds, sand, and Wealden clay at a depth of 12 to 16 feet.

There were at least 14 furnaces and 14 forges in the Kentish Weald, many of which ceased production by the mid-17th century.

After the decline of iron and textile production, Kent's biggest industry was undoubtedly brewing - with the oast house for drying hops remaining an iconic symbol of the county to this



day.

Hops used in the brewing of beer had been grown on a commercial scale since at least the 16th century, but Kent's once-thriving brewing industry was reduced to just one substantial firm - Shepherd Neame - by the 1990s.

"Even 100 years ago, we had about 100 breweries," adds Mr Preston.

"But the restrictive licensing on pubs was their demise, and it got to a point where just national breweries were supplying the county."

"Before, it used to be local breweries supplying your local pub."

With the county today very much remaining in a post-industrial landscape, it's perhaps hard to imagine the important place Kent industry held in supporting the expanding city of London during the 19th century.

As a source of millions of bricks and millions of tons of lime, cement, stone and sand, north Kent became a major supplier of the capital's market.

"In the 19th century we saw the cement and brick industries boom," said Mr Preston.

"London spread like a plague during this time, and there was a requirement for tonnes of bricks and cement for house building."

"North Kent was close to London and rich in the geological materials, so it was natural the area would supply London when massive building projects were undertaken."

Before they were transported by rail, barges provided a cheap means of transport for Kent's bulky products. To meet demand, barge-building yards sprung up on the Thames, Medway and Swale - where cheap waterborne carriage was essential.

Meanwhile, Chatham dockyard was Kent's biggest industrial site producing ships, and boats for the Royal Navy.

To fill the demand created by the building material industries for ma-



chinery, an engineering sector developed which, at the time, was at the cutting edge of technology. Engineering workshops and iron foundries were developed to see new products in the form of aircraft and road vehicles, including steam and petrol lorries, buses and motorcycles.

Along with the works of world famous engineers, coal mines, gasworks and power stations in the county have long disappeared - becoming valuable brownfield sites for redevelopment.

Already most structures associated with the cement industry have been demolished, with a similar scenario for brick and paper making.

But according to Mr Preston, Kent's post-industrial era only mirrors a national trend.

"The decline is down to two things, being the whole structure of our industry in this country and globalisation."

"What we're experiencing now is essentially a warehouse economy, where we distribute rather than make things."

"Coupled with globalisation which makes things cheaper to import from the east, these industries are virtually non-existent anymore - so it's essential we remember them."

Pictures: Above the former silk weavers in Canterbury and below that, a former brewery in the city.



HISTORY: Crescent Yard at Frindsbury a warship then barge yard



HOP: The oast houses at Beltring at Paddock Wood



MINING: The old colliery buildings at Snowden

Some of the best Images of Kent 2016

It is a page many turn to first each weekend as it captures some of the county's finest features. We reflect on the best

By Chris Britcher

chris.britcher@archant.co.uk

FOR everyone who lives in the county, its natural beauty can sometimes be overlooked through familiarity. Yet, for many, Kent's splendour does not only get noticed, but photographed too.

And that's where our popular weekly Images of Kent section proves such a hit.

Run alongside our letters page every week, it gives our creative readers the chance to have their images showcased in your favourite weekend paper and for others to enjoy.

And what better time to reflect on another year of great shots than now as we take a look at some of the best we featured in 2016.

Whether it's a dramatic landscape, or simply a beautifully lit scene, we look to bring some great images each and every week.

Let's be honest, there's plenty of potential all around us.

But while you enjoy them, don't stop there. Why not look to join their



FAVERSHAM: Stonebridge Pond by Colin Miles

ranks during 2017 and send in some of your photographs?

As most people are today armed with smartphones packing some serious camera technology within them, there's no excuse not to try your luck and send in some of the scenes from across Kent which caught your eye.

All you need to do is capture a moment during your time in the county and if it makes us sit up and take notice, we'll publish it in a future edition of Kent on Sunday so tens of thousands of our readers can be impressed too.

Interested? Then after you enjoy

these images see if there's something you can send to us too.

Simply email the image (make sure it's high resolution - it should really be at least 500k in size - any less may not be big enough to print) and send it to: editorial@kosmedia.co.uk along with your name and address.

And we'll look forward to seeing your best efforts here this time next year.

For now, though, allow us to extend our warmest thank you to everyone who has sent images in during the course of the year. Once again the standard was exceptionally high.



GRAVESEND: Gravesend Reach by Geoff Foxwell



DOVER: Connaught Park, by Brian van der veen

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MAIDSTONE: Fireworks at Leeds Castle by Ernie Jordan



MARGATE: Waves on the shore by Steven Legg



AYLESFORD: Bridge by the village by Paul Wilkinson



HERNE BAY: Coastguard on the coast by Graham Read



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and could make a big difference to your business this winter.

Enter now by visiting www.sesbusinesswater.co.uk/win

Pick 'n' Fix from SES Business Water offers businesses the chance to choose from a boiler service, repairs to dripping taps, repairs to leaking sinks, stopcock repairs, or repairs to dripping ball valves. Each service normally costs £50 under the offer, and could help businesses avoid much more costly repairs this winter. You can find out more at www.sesbusinesswater.co.uk/pick-n-fix

Pick 'n' Fix is just one way in which SES Business Water are demonstrating their commitment to helping local businesses get watertight for winter. Their recently launched Winter Hub is packed full of useful information, easily digestible tips and expert advice – as well as handy infographics which are free to download and share with your team – because making plans to get your business watertight is easiest when everyone is on-board!

Here in the UK, winter can often mean not only freezing temperatures and possibly snow, but also rain, rain and more rain.

Bad weather and flooding costs businesses of all sizes thousands of pounds each and every year. For smaller businesses, losses could threaten survival – but despite the worrying statistics around winter damage, around 60% of UK businesses have no plans in place. If you would like to find out more about how to protect your business from winter damage, about the small changes which could make a really big difference, and about how SES Business Water can help, why not take a look at their Winter Hub today? www.sesbusinesswater.co.uk/watertight

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Entries close 13th January 2017. Pick'n'Fix service applies to one domestic sized boiler only, up to a maximum rating of 45kW. Excludes any boiler spares, additional parts or remedial work. Excludes taps with ceramic discs. These can be repaired at an additional charge – call us on 0208 722 7004 to enquire. Includes stop cocks up to 22mm. Any replacement parts will be chargeable in addition. Non-standard ball valves excluded. Please note that any dripping caused by a defective syphon would be excluded. Repairs can be carried out at additional charge.





COMEDIC: The hilarious show is sure to leave the audience in tears

Fascinating Aida's Keane creates one-woman show

While the trio are on a break, Dillie Keane tours with her own personal tales...

DILLIE Keane is once again taking a break from her Fascinating Aida gal pals, to bring audiences around the country her solo show.

Written alongside fellow Aida star, Adele Anderson, the show debuted at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2015.

Ms Keane enlightens: "The show is a lifetime distilled into a cabaret show. It's both moving and funny - well, very funny at times, and yet audiences never leave without people tellin me they cried at least once.

"It's basically all about love, because that's always the most interesting subject for songwriters, but it isn't all necessarily all about romantic love because the deep importance of friendship and chocolate should never be overlooked."

The entertainer claims it differs

from Fascinating Aida, a comedy singing group and satirical cabaret act, in the topics of songs which will be sung.

"You'll hear songs with stories and, unlike Fascinating Aida which is more topical and satirical, this is a very personal journey," says Ms Keane. "But it's my story through song. The songs chose themselves. It was such an easy show to put together because everything sort of fell into place."

As Ms Keane is usually part of a three, it's different to see her performing a one-person show. Of her decision to go it alone, she says: "Adele decided to go on holiday to North Korea so we decided we'd have three months off from Fascinating Aida, but I'm not very good with time off, so I came up with a solo show.

"Then Adele was diagnosed with

cancer and ended up in hospital instead of North Korea, so she had to take 2015 and 2016 off. It was a dreadful blow for all of us, but luckily for my producers who might have oost their shirts, I was able to fill the most important bookings with my solo show."

It's not the end for Fascinating Aida though.

"Adele and I have been together 33 years, and Liza Pulman loves the work too which has been wonderful for us," she said.

"At last, we've found a soprano who doesn't think we're holding her back from a West End career. We've been able to plan and work non-stop, and we're great friends. So never mind the fact that the audiences want us back, we absolutely love working together."

Fascinating Aida has been on the receiving end of great reviews, but

Ms Keane isn't afraid to admit that she's had her share of horrible ones.

"Somebody once accused me of having an artichoke in my hair," she laughs. "I was most upset. It was a rather attractive flower on a lip and I thought it looked lovely."

When it comes to the audience leaving her show, the comedian says "I'd like them to have the feeling of having had a really rich, funny, emotional evening and having spent their money wisely. That's really important to me - that people have a really good time."

Ms Keane's show is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Trinity Theatre on March 31, Margate's Theatre Royal on April 28, and Bromley's Churchill Theatre on April 29.

For tickets visit, trinitytheatre.net, theatrroyalmargate.com, or churchilltheatre.co.uk

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Mamma Mia! West End Abba show set to be sunny delight

By Emily King

emily.king@archant.co.uk

WEST END smash hit Mamma Mia! is coming to Kent after confirming a string of shows at Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre for July.

The hugely successful show, based on the movie musical of the same name, will run at the theatre from July 11-29 and tickets are already on sale.

Mamma Mia! is Judy Craymer's vision of staging the story-telling magic of Abba's timeless songs with a tale of family and friendship unfolding on a Greek island paradise.

To date, it has been seen by more than 60 million people in 50 productions in 16 different languages. Mamma Mia! The Movie is the highest worldwide grossing live-action musical film of all time.

The London production of Mamma Mia! has now been seen by more than 10 per cent of the entire UK population and is one of only five musicals to have run for more than 10 years both on Broadway and in the West End.



FAMOUS: The London production has been seen by more than 10 per cent of the UK population

In 2011, it became the first Western musical ever to be staged in Mandarin in China.

With music and lyrics by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvaeus, Mamma Mia! is written by Catherine Johnson, directed by Phyllida Lloyd and choreographed by Anthony Van Laast.

Creator and producer Judy Craymer said: "We are absolutely delighted to be bringing Mamma

Mia! to Canterbury for the first time with the UK Tour. Mamma Mia! is fun for all the family with its heart-warming story and the irresistible songs of Abba. We can't wait to share the fun with Canterbury."

Set on a Greek island paradise, a story of love, friendship and identity is cleverly told through the timeless Abba classics.

Sophie's quest to discover the fa-

ther she's never known brings her mother face to face with three men from her mother's distant romantic past on the eve of a wedding they'll never forget.

Casting is yet to be announced but it's bound to be a show not to be missed, as it's a story popular for all people and any age.

Tickets available from the box office on 01227 787787, or marlowetheatre.com.

Greg Davies goes on road

THE INBETWEENERS comedian, Greg Davies, is coming to Margate's Winter Gardens on September 15 and 16.

For tickets visit margatewintergardens.co.uk



Irish superstar Rose-Marie

IRISH singing star Rose-Marie comes to Margate's Theatre Royal on February 24, following a tour of America.

Her latest album My Gift Of Love For You has just hit platinum - selling 500,000 units.

Tickets are already on sale and can be purchased from theatreroyalmargate.com

Simon and Garfunkel

DIRECT from its success in London's West End, The Simon and Garfunkel Story is coming to Margate's Theatre Royal on January 20.

For tickets visit theatreroyalmargate.com



The Wedding Singer

THE WEDDING Singer, the musical, comes to the Tunbridge Wells's Assembly Hall from September 5-9.

The show stars Jon Robyns, Ray Quinn, Cassie Compton, Roxanne Pallett and Ruth Madoc.

For tickets visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

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The Addams Family

EASTENDERS' Samantha Womack is coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from October 31 to November 4 in the Addams Family.
For tickets visit orchardtheatre.co.uk



Tiff Stevenson on tour

COMEDIAN Tiff Stevenson is bringing her seventh stand-up show, Seven, to Canterbury's Marlowe Theatre on February 9.
She explores our need to make huge worldwide impactful events by delving into morality, vanity, film reboots, and clouds.
For tickets visit marlowetheatre.com

The Fureys play Margate

IRISH musicians and songwriters, The Fureys, will play at Margate's Theatre Royal on May 6.
Tickets can be purchased from the box office, theatre-royalmargate.com



Bowie's Birthday bash

THE late British rock icon, David Bowie would have celebrated his 70th birthday on January 8.
To mark the occasion, there will be a concert at his old school, Ravens Wood School in Bromley.
For tickets visit www.ticketsource.co.uk/bowiebromleybirthdaybash

Vicar's Picnic is back for fourth year in 2017

By Emily King
emily.king@archant.co.uk

KENT'S biggest little music festival will be back in 2017.

In 2016 the festival celebrated its third year as a fully-fledged multi-day family festival on the banks of the river Medway, in Yalding.

Now organisers have announced the festival will take place again on July 14 and 15.

In line with previous years, headliners will be internationally-renowned artists, with past acts including Reef and Mark Morris of the Bluetones.

Vicar's Picnic, named because of its origins in a garden off Vicarage Road in Yalding, started out as a garden party for villagers who had missed out on tickets for Glastonbury.

Named because of its original location on Vicarage Road, a back of the beer mat sketch anticipated a one-off garden party that would showcase great music as well as raising money for local causes. So, completely by accident, the festival was born.



It has since expanded from a one-day gig to offer a two-day festival with camping, two music stages, a children's play area and a poetry and comedy tent.

Not only is the festival open to those who'd like to camp, but visitors can stay in campervans and caravans, or for those who really don't enjoy 'slumming it', glamping (glamorous camping) is also an option.

The founders have said that their philosophy is "Upping our game year on year, putting

experience before profit while bringing the best in new breaking artists alongside established bands."

In previous years the festival has used ticket sales to donate money to children's hospice Demelza, and Scout groups.

A limited number of early bird tickets are now on sale in the village from the Post Office, Village Tea Rooms, Walnut Tree public house and the Chequers Inn, Laddingford or by visiting www.vicarspicnic.co.uk



PARTY: The festival is an annual celebration



ALTERNATIVE: It was created by Glastonbury lovers



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Keeping up with Star Wars star Felicity Jones

2016 has been a big year for Ms Jones - she teamed up with Tom Hanks, and now she's in Rogue One...

Felicity Jones may be fast-becoming hot property in Hollywood, but when it comes to mapping out her next move, the British actress insists there's never a set plan.

Refusing to take herself too seriously, the 33-year-old is in great spirits and reveals in no uncertain terms that she prefers to simply "fly by the seat of your pants".

And her breezy attitude - coupled with formidable talent - seems to be working wonders.

Since landing an Oscar-nomination for her role in 2014 Stephen Hawking biopic *The Theory of Everything*, Oxford-educated Jones has justly shot to the top of nearly every film-maker's most-wanted list.

This year, she's already teamed up with Tom Hanks and director Ron Howard for *Inferno*, the third adaptation of Dan Brown's novels.

Now, as 2016 draws to a close, she's also starring in *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story* - the first in a new series of Star Wars stand-alone films that, despite sitting in a universe fans know and love, features new characters and storylines.

Reportedly set somewhere between the aftermath of 2005's *Star Wars: Episode III - Revenge Of The Sith* and events in the original *Star Wars* film, Jones plays Jyn Erso, the impetuous leader of a group of unlikely heroes, who band together to steal the plans to the Death Star, the Empire's ultimate weapon of destruction.



HOT PROPERTY: FELICITY JONES

"I feel like *Star Wars* crosses continents," notes the Birmingham-born actress, who jokes she'll be pleased to finally remove the "invisible gag" once the epic is released.

"It's something people love, whether they're particularly into science-fiction or not, and I really feel the heart of these films are always rooted in relationships.

"That's why we keep coming back to them. You're so fond of the characters, and you want them to succeed against the forces of evil."

And while her hands might be tied as far as plot-spoilers are concerned, she's happy to tease hardened fans by likening it to the 1980 classic *The Empire Strikes Back* - in that there's a quest at the centre of it.

"It's very much rooted in a parent-child relationship and father-daughter relationship, which is the thrust of the story," observes Jones, whose father worked as a journalist and her mother in advertising. "But it also has moments of lightness and fun and humour."

But is she prepared for the marked prospect of intensified stardom being in *Star Wars* brings with it?

"There's so much hard work that goes into making these films, you can't suddenly go, 'Oh, it's so awful, people want to see the films'," Jones reasons with sincerity. "It's a privilege, and it's a pleasure to share with people."

Rogue One: A Star Wars Story was released in December.

X Factor's Olly concert

OLLY MURS, one of British music's biggest stars, will play an outdoor concert at Canterbury's The Spitfire Ground on July 7.

Mr Murs said: "I am thrilled to play at The Spitfire Ground in Kent. Outdoor shows are so much fun and I am looking forward to performing my biggest songs on my biggest outdoor tour!"

For tickets visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk

Comedy Out of Order

ARTHUR BOSTROM ('Allo 'Allo), Sue Holderness (*Only Fools and Horses*), Susie Amy (*Footballers' Wives*), James Holmes (*Miranda*) and Shaun Williamson (*EastEnders*) join the cast of *Out of Order*, the comedy show about political scandal coming to Dartford's Orchard Theatre from January 2-7.

For tickets and for more information visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.

Busted's big comeback

BUSTED, the pop trio, are back and have announced a UK headline tour which they're bringing to Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall, following the release of their brand new single in over a decade, *On What You're On*.

They're making an appearance on October 14.

For tickets and more information visit ticketmaster.co.uk

T.Rex tribute band

T.REXTASY have been performing all over the world for 25 years, a career that ironically out-lives Marc Bolan's very own T.Rex.

On January 14, the band is coming to Tunbridge Wells' Assembly Hall to transport audiences back to the 70s for the Marc Bolan 40th commemorative anniversary tour.

For tickets and more information, visit assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk

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It's never been easier to get to Hong Kong

Hong Kong glitters in a pearly haze. Its natural beauty is juxtaposed by its dizzying man-made constructions.

I've travelled here thanks to Cathay Pacific's new four-times-weekly route from Gatwick, launched in autumn 2016.

Visitors prior to 1998 may recall the unique landing approach, which swept over densely-populated Kowloon. Now the airport has relocated to a small island, Chek Lap Kok, and it's easy to jump on a train to Hong Kong Station.

We stay at the Dorsett Wanchai, a smart and newly renovated hotel overlooking the Happy Valley racecourse. The short but hair-raising funicular railway ride from Hong Kong Park to Victoria Peak sweeps away any vestiges of jet lag.

Queues are vast and the ascent steep but it is the most iconic way to get to the summit. Once there, the views are stunning, with the foreground dominated by the authoritative Bank of China Tower, Hong Kong's fourth tallest building.

Back in Hong Kong Park, a wander around the raised walkways of the Edward Youde Aviary is a delightful (and free) way to spend an hour: we



THE ICONIC HONG KONG SKYLINE

spot yellow-faced and Bali mynas, Java sparrows and maroon-breasted crowned pigeons.

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, in the former office and residence of the Commander of British Forces in Hong Kong, provides a beginner's guide to a complex subject. The collection houses teapots dating from Western Zhou (11 BC – 771 BC) to the 20th century. Next door is LockCha Tea House where you can sample a dizzying variety of teas (try white

peony or silver needle) and enjoy great vegetarian dim sum.

Public transport is efficient and easy to use. The Star Ferry service, which dates back to the 1880s, runs about every 10 minutes between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. It is a quintessential way to take in the city at around 25p a trip. It's worth picking up a pre-paid Octopus card, which covers ferries, buses, trams and the MTR underground train. The trams retain their nostalgic charm – a seat

Top five foodie delights

Egg tarts: a Portuguese legacy available everywhere.

Egg waffles: For a variety of flavours, Lee Keung Kee in North Point is Michelin-recommended and very cheap.

Tim Ho Wan: highly acclaimed dim sum at the super-stylish Ozone in the Tsim Sha Tsui, Mong Kok and elsewhere.

Cocktails with a view: Views are exquisite at the super-stylish Ozone in the Ritz-Carlton, Kowloon, but it's pricey.

Wan Chai: this district is heaving with exciting places to eat, including Malaysian restaurant Sabah – their laksa is exquisite.

■ An Executive/Theme Suite at the Dorsett Wanchai is around £180 per night. A Grand Deluxe Harbour View Room at The Peninsula is around £700 per night.

on the top affords great views of different neighbourhoods. Taxis are much cheaper than Britain, though not all drivers speak English.

Our base for the second part of the trip, The Peninsula, is a Hong Kong legend. Its marbled 1920s grandeur is

tempered by sweetly courteous staff and its accessibility – locals come regularly for afternoon tea and take short cuts through the lobby. Rooms in the newer part have staggering harbour views and were a great place to watch the famous Symphony of Lights – nightly illuminating some of Victoria Harbour's most iconic buildings.

This city is a foodie's paradise, with 61 Michelin-starred eateries. Indeed, most appetites can be satisfied in Hong Kong: the huge shopping malls around Tsim Sha Tsui are temples to commerce. The famous Mong Kok and Temple Street Night Markets stock cartoon-based trinkets. For a more singular experience, try the antique shops on Cat Street, Mong Kok's flower market or the bird market.

After decades of fairly indiscriminate construction, there's an appetite for stricter planning laws. But nowhere is there a more perfect juxtaposition of East and West, tradition and modernity. Top international architects strive to outdo each other. But most respect the principles of feng shui, which explains why many of the tallest buildings have 'dragon holes' – to ensure the flow of positive energy through the city.

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Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Crossing limit lift is backward step

HOW disappointing to read that the speed limit on the Sheppey Crossing is to return to 70mph in the spring [KoS, 18.12]. This is a retrograde step.

The reduction to 50mph in July 2015 was a welcome move in the right direction towards slowing down speed obsessed motorists on our extremely hazardous roads.

To me, 70mph is too fast a speed for motor vehicles to be travelling at on any of our roads, including motorways.

Motorists racing like rally drivers along Britain's highways is disrespectfully dangerous to everyone concerned.

Cars and lorries are deadly missiles on wheels, and should be driven sensitively and with great care.

Despite the increasing carnage on our roads, Highways England has proved once again that it is stuck in a cloud of denial rendering it seemingly incapable of clear, forward thinking.

Only by acknowledging that excessive speed is the single biggest cause of road traffic accidents in this country, can Highways England ever be expected to overturn and reform our outdated 70mph speed limit.

Clive Wilkins-Oppler,
 Petham

Come off it Colin, grammars fail us

COLIN Bullen is an excellent protagonist [KoS, letters, 18.12], however, he seems to lack cogency.

Theresa May has declared she wants the best outcome for every child. However, grammar schools cream off the best, discourage the majority and drive down the achievements overall.

The selective education we have in Kent shows that overall we are far from top of the league.

The same arguments apply to super selection. Those who fail to get in will drive down the overall results.

Of course the ablest need full encouragement but this can be well achieved within the existing schools.

This, I understand, is the majority expert opinion. I don't expect Colin Bullen to agree.

It's the same as climate change. The majority agree but Colin Bullen doesn't accept that either.

John Champneys,
 Tunbridge Wells

Selectives simply do not work

COLIN Bullen's letter about the benefits of grammar schools not only dismisses the views of 33 local

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Joined up thinking and fast for our roads

RECENT stories about the improvements needed to the A2 road for Dover docks access and our MPs' (welcome) intervention on both this subject and the not-so-temporary speed limit on the A20 between Folkestone and Dover have put it all back in the news.

Dover's vital contribution to our country's trade and economy has been sadly side-lined for too long. Calais has three motorways feeding its port. We have just one plus an inadequate A road.

It takes only a hiccup in the free flow of traffic to bring gridlock to large parts of Kent. Also for too long various aspects of our road infrastructure have been considered separately, when in fact they are linked and need to be considered overall.

These include the A20 generally, lorry parks, the A2 and M2 – including the impacts of a Lower Thames Crossing and Ebbsfleet Garden City.

The Alliance of British Drivers in

Kent has long called for provision of sufficient (wherever located) lorry parking, both for normal resting, emergency 'stacking', and maybe in future for customs clearance on A2 and M20 routes; an improved A20 between Dover and Folkestone, to include a crawler lane for trucks on the ascent out of town; the inbound A20 be restored to national speed limit as immediately as practical, variable limits to apply when TAP is active; if the Otterpool garden town goes ahead the M20 junction 11 may need upgrading further than currently planned; the whole A2 to be upgraded, as is happening at its London end; and the M2 to become three-lane.

In addition, for the A2 at Dover to be completely dualled and at Whitfield, either an underpass to avoid the roundabout, or a northern by-pass to join the A256.

This needs to happen during the 2020-25 round of road finance.

Ian Taylor
 Alliance of British Drivers

Royal Society this month.

The problems of the 11+ were researched by the Sutton Trust who proved 22 per cent of children were incorrectly defined based on their eventual GCSE results.

The Education Policy Institute highlighted Kent's tutoring problem, stating that Kent's attempt to create a fairer 11+ had made no difference at all, and mentioning a survey suggesting 44 per cent of parents used tutors.

While Education Datalab researchers recently reported that non-selective schools in grammar school areas have less qualified teachers, and

proving high school pupils underachieve compared to similar pupils in all-ability schools.

The vast majority of top performing nations worldwide use comprehensive secondary education. Indeed Andreas Schleicher, head of education at global research body the OECD, said international evidence shows grammar school systems benefit wealthy families and do not raise overall standards.

Clearly Mr Bullen's rosy view that grammars benefit the working class is based on long gone days and anecdotes not facts.

As a parent of a primary school child I can offer my own anecdotes. I know many families who feel they have no hope of a Kent Test pass because it's now the norm to pay for a year of tutoring, invest in a prep school, or spend many hours practicing 11+ papers.

A bright child whose parents give no such help will end up in a high school, with less qualified teachers, few top sets, and a sixth form with a more vocational focus. Kent is wasting the talent of too many children by operating a flawed test and a school divide that produces poor results.

Joanne Bartley
 Kent Education Network

Cutting national debt in 200 years

RICHARD Ablett's letter saying there's more important issues than the constant harping about in/out of the EU [KoS, 11.12] is so correct.

Closer to home though we have problems with our economy which are never addressed by politicians or people just accept what is happening in front of their eyes.

We have a national debt approaching and government have stated will hit £2 trillion within this parliament. There's personal debt which has just passed the £1.5tn level for the first time. A deficit that is in the region of £50bn.

This debt will never be paid off whatever is said as we haven't had many years of surplus since after the Second World War, in fact you can count them on your fingers and they are never of any real size.

Just stop and think if we paid off the debt at £10bn a year it would take at least 200 years before taking into account the interest repayments.

The government is spending more now than when the coalition came to power in 2010 so the reality is there hasn't been any cuts.

Without the reduction in debt we will never be able to fund all the services we hold close to our hearts such as education, the NHS and many others.

Dave Preston,
 Tunbridge Wells

KOS 10 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

AS part of our commitment to providing the best service to you, we have produced our 10 guiding principles

Kent on Sunday will:

- 1) Be available in every postcode in Kent.
- 2) Be fair, accurate and balanced.
- 3) Be written in clear, concise English.

- 4) Not be overly sensational.
- 5) Have a sense of humour.
- 6) Have an easily understood division between news, comment and advertising.
- 7) Seek to celebrate as well as constructively criticise.
- 8) Highlight topical issues of concern to East

people living in the county.

9) Spotlight individual cases which raise broader concerns.

10) Champion causes that it feels are important to the well-being of the county and its people.

We hope you enjoy Kent on Sunday.
 kent-life.co.uk kentnews.co.uk



Oyster shells in Whitstable

by **Brian Summers,**
from **Faversham**

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Glen
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60s Sounds in Surrey

Thatcher's Hotel, Guildford

6 Jan, 10 Feb, 10 Mar & 14 Apr, 2017 - Quote: TG-KOS

ENJOY a fun-packed party break at this charming Tudor-style hotel near Guildford, close to The Hogs Back Brewery, and Polesden Lacey, an Edwardian country house and estate. Entertainment on 6 Jan 2017 is by Fortunes lead singer Eddie Mooney and Glen Leon as Tom Jones - £129pp; 10 Feb 2017 features The Beatle (Fab Four tribute) & comedy singer Ian Larkin - £139pp; 10 Mar 2017 with Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) and Dave Grant (ex-Paper Lace) - £139pp; 14 Apr 2017 (Easter) with the Frankie Valli Story & singing duo Bus Stop - £159pp.

INCLUDED: Entertainment both nights • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV, tea/coffee tray and free wifi • Free parking



Somerset Seaside 60s Party

Pontins Sand Bay Somerset Coast

Self-Drive • Friday, 16 June, 2017 - Quote: SA6-KOS

Join us at Pontins Sand Bay resort, near Weston Super Mare in Somerset, for a Super Summer Party - for over 40s only - packed with entertainment. We've lined up a brilliant showbill with Union Gap, The Pacemakers, The Swinging Blue Jeans, Roy Carter (ex-Drifters & Foundations) PLUS The New All Stars. With non-stop entertainment from Friday evening to late Sunday and free drinks every night, this is going to be a party weekend to remember.

Free Drinks
Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

INCLUDED: 3 Free drinks per person per night - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers • Full entertainment programme • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 breakfasts & 3 dinners • Free parking

3 nights
half board
PLUS
£159^{pp}



£1 Drinks
Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

2 nights
half board
£149^{pp}



Rob Wheeler
as 'The Beatle'

Seaside 60s Sounds in West Sussex

Chatsworth Hotel, Worthing

31 March, 2017 • Quote: WG3-KOS

Join us in Worthing for an exclusive Party Weekend and enjoy £1 drinks and a 60s music tribute act each night, including Rob Wheeler 'The Beatle' and Steve Williamson 60s Motown sounds of the Drifters, The Stylistics, The Four Tops & The Temptations. The Chatsworth is one of the finest hotels on the south coast, just a stone's throw from the sea and a short stroll to the town centre. All bedrooms are en-suite and a lift services all floors.

INCLUDED: Happy Hour £1 drinks from 7pm to 8pm both evenings - pint of house beer or small glass of wine • Live entertainment both nights • 2 nights sharing an en-suite bedroom with TV & free wifi • 2 dinners and 2 breakfasts



Sounds of the 60s Summer Seaside Party

Pontins Pakefield, Suffolk Coast

Self-Drive • Friday, 7 July, 2017 - Quote: PA7-KOS

Join us at Pontins Pakefield, on the Suffolk coast, for our exclusive, private summer 60s Party Weekend - for over 40s only. We've lined up a brilliant entertainment showbill featuring The Ivy League, Hermans Hermits, Vanity Fare, Steve Ellis's Love Affair, plus The Beached Boys. With non-stop fun from Friday evening to late on Sunday and HALF PRICE DRINKS, this is one party weekend you're sure to love.

Half Price Drinks
Entertainment
Over 40s only
£10pp deposit

INCLUDED: Half Price bar drinks - house beers & spirits, wine by the glass, pumped soft drinks & pumped mixers - lunch times and evenings from Friday night to Sunday night • Entertainment • 3 nights en-suite chalet - club upgrade available • 3 dinners & 3 breakfasts • Free parking

3 nights
half board
PLUS
£149^{pp}

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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KENT LIFE

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HYUNDAI: The new i30 will be sleeker and more spacious...

New Hyundai advances space race

PREVIEW: Three generations of i30 have charted Hyundai's rise from value champion to quality mainstream car maker – the latest arrives soon...

WE will see in early 2017 whether Hyundai can deliver yet another major advance with its new i30 hatchback.

The ambitious Korean marque has stepped up from value to posh mainstream brand in less than ten years, and a key yardstick has been the steady progress of its VW Golf/Ford Focus/Vauxhall Astra rival.

Expect the i30 to remain keenly priced though from around £15k and backed by Hyundai's excellent five-year/unlimited mileage warranty.

The new design will be a plus: you either loved or hated the Marmite lines of the outgoing car, with awful slabs above the front wheel arches and an excessive upward swage line, both details making the car look nose heavy.

The Mk3 is easier on the eye and notable for an even more pronounced interpretation of an Audi grille, set to become the next Hyundai corporate nose; interesting to note that former VW/Audi man Peter Schreyer is now the Hyundai group's design supremo.

The car is claimed to be one of the most spacious in class with a significantly larger boot (395 litres) than the rivals mentioned above, though a long way behind Peugeot's 'peer of the rear' 308 with its 470 litres.

Early pictures show that the interior can be spec'd to luxurious levels, with an optional



panoramic sunroof adding to the airy feel of the cabin, and complimented by a stripped-down dashboard featuring an eight-inch infotainment touchscreen – current models show that Hyundai is getting this kind of input better than most.

The new i30 is also expected to add value

with a raft of safety and driver aids, while powertrains will include a swing towards petrol. All carmakers are worried about diesel's emissions viability: diesel will still be offered, but frugal 120hp 1.0-litre three-cylinder and new 140hp 1.4 turbo petrol units will grab attention.

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Official fuel consumption for the ŠKODA range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 31.4 (9.0) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 45.6 (6.2) to 88.3 (3.2), Combined 39.2 (7.2) to 80.7 (3.5). CO₂ emissions for the ŠKODA range in mpg are 164 to 90 g/km. The advertised range is correct as of 10 October 2016 and is subject to change. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.

All aboard Vauxhall's Zafira fun bus

Versatile, good looking and with some clever features, Vauxhall's seven-seat MPV appeals to families and those with an action lifestyle, **writes Steve Loader...**

PEOPLE carriers or MPVs are those one-box designs you buy with your head rather than your heart. And it's no surprise that their popularity has declined lately in favour of trendy crossovers and SUVs, though it's arguable whether most of those offer any more to driver enjoyment than an MPV.

However, if you must have an MPV – multi-purpose vehicle – then some of these family troop carriers look and behave better than others.

The Ford S-Max might claim the mantle of the best handling or sportiest MPV, but the Kia Proceed and Vauxhall's Zafira Tourer are good looking all-rounders.

The Vauxhall is a particularly interesting case, as it was originally sold on arrival in 2012 as a bigger and more upmarket partner to the existing Zafira, and given the 'Tourer' suffix to emphasise the difference.

When the old stager finally gave way to age and newer competition in 2014, the classy Tourer was left centre stage, and had a facelift in October.

Officially priced from £18,665, it is a handsome wagon that can be enhanced by smart alloys and



various custom add-ons.

There's a huge cabin and plenty of powertrain and trim choice too: our test car was the mid spec Tech Line with the popular and powerful 170PS (167bhp) 2.0-litre diesel, well-suited to the car's potential full load options.

For it is the consummate family

fun bus: in addition to seven seats as standard, it also now features Vauxhall's excellent OnStar system offering advice and emergency assistance 24/7, plus a 4G Wi-Fi hotspot able to connect seven devices simultaneously.

But the car's versatility is its biggest selling point: the three



second row seats can be moved independently and, in five-seat configuration, the Zafira Tourer offers up to 710 litres of boot space to window level. This can be boosted to a van-like 1,860 litres when all second-row seats are folded.

But there is more than the obvious: the deep and capacious

Vauxhall Zafira Tourer Tech Line 2.0CDTi 170PS

Price:	from £23,370
Driving appeal:	★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Ford S-Max

FlexRail centre console is invaluable and there is also an optional Flex-Fix rear-end bike carrier that slides out of the rear bumper to take up to four bicycles, yet the tailgate can still be opened.

The interior is impeccably screwed together, and has a classy airiness that can be enhanced by a massive panoramic roof.

Out on the road, the Tourer handles respectably for a relatively tall vehicle expected to carry up to seven passengers plus luggage, but it does lean a little on corners.

This can be improved by specifying the FlexRide chassis offering three driving modes: Standard, Sport and Tour. Tour raises the comfort, while Sport sharpens the handling and, with the gearshift nicely to hand, the big Tourer can then feel quite agile.



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£20,456 - £27,394 (pro-rata) + SEN Allowance (£1,227)

Teaching Assistant
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Are you committed, motivated and enthusiastic?
Can you make a difference? If so, share your talents and expertise with us. Abbey Court caters for pupils aged 3-19 with Severe Learning Difficulties, and is currently located on 2 sites; Rainham (Nursery & Primary) and Strood (Secondary & Further Education).

The Primary provision will move to a new purpose built school at a Strood location in April 2017. Working hours are 32.5 p/w (8.45am – 3.45pm), term time only. Comprehensive training and induction will be provided.

HLTA qualification essential to post. Childcare experience, or relevant childcare qualifications are desirable for Teaching Assistant positions

Due to the conditions and complex needs of the pupils at Abbey Court School, continuity and consistency of support is paramount and therefore candidates for all positions will need to commit to the full working hours of the post

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Any offer of appointment for post is subject to a satisfactory Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

For an application pack, please write to/telephone
Mrs Linda Taylor, School Business Manager
Abbey Court School, Rede Court Road, Strood, Kent, ME2 3SP
(01634 338236)

(stating the role for which you are applying):
Please note CV's will NOT be accepted.
Closing date: 16.1.17

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LEGAL AND PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003:
Application for Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that Stuart O'Leary of Republic Events Ltd has applied to Canterbury City Council for the GRANT of a Premises Licence:

For the community arm of City Sound Project Music Festival held on the first bank holiday weekend of the year. (Usually the last weekend in April or first weekend in May, Saturday, Sunday and Monday). **Saturday/Sunday: Provision of Plays - 11:00 - 20:00, Films - 11:00 - 20:00, Live music - 11:00 - 20:00, Recorded Music - 11:00 - 20:00, Sale of Alcohol - 11:00 - 20:00. Monday: Provision of Plays - 11:00 - 18:00, Films - 11:00 - 18:00, Live music - 11:00 - 18:00, Recorded Music - 11:00 - 18:00, Sale of Alcohol - 11:00 - 18:00 for the premises Dane John Gardens situated at Watling Street, Canterbury, CT1 1YW.**

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at www.canterbury.gov.uk/licensing or at Council Offices, Military Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1YW tel. 01227 862000 by appointment with the Licensing Team between 10am and 4pm Monday to Friday.

Any person wishing to submit representations to this application must give notice in writing to the address shown above, giving in detail the grounds of objection by 19/01/2017.

The Council will not entertain representations where the writer requests that their identity remains anonymous. Copies of all representations will be included in the papers presented to the Licensing Sub Committee and will therefore pass into the public domain. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

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ARCHANT }

By Tom Pyman

tom.pyman@archant.co.uk

ONE would hope the summer of 2016 would be remembered not just for a divisive referendum but also another gripping Olympics, which proved to be Great Britain's best ever performance at a foreign Games.

And arguably at the heart of the team was a number of elite sportsmen and women from the county - indeed Dartford sprinter Adam Gemili was named captain of the athletics team who told us before the squad flew to Rio de Janeiro in August he was "going out there to medal".

But with the athletics events - for many the highlight of the competition - on the backburner until the final week, some of Kent's finest sportspeople came to the fore in other disciplines.

Tunbridge Wells' Bryony Shaw performed admirably but failed to match her previous success of a bronze in Beijing in 2008, but impressed in her discipline, ultimately finishing ninth in the RS:X windsurfing event.

The county's first medal went to Cranbrook's Ruaridh McConnochie after being part of the silver-winning Great Britain rugby sevens team.

The former Cranbrook School student was part of the team which made the final match and faced hot favourites Fiji in a battle for the gold medal.

But after beating one of the favourites, South Africa, to reach the last two, they were outclassed by Fiji who coasted to a comfortable 43-7 victory.

Yet the result will have been cheered throughout the county courtesy of McConnochie's role.

He had initially only been selected as a reserve for the squad, but was drafted into the full team after other players pulled out.

Kent then struck gold when Ashford's Tom Ransley helped Team GB's all-conquering rowing team to victory in the men's coxed eight.

The former King's School pupil improved on his 2012 performance, which saw him take bronze in the coxed eights, and the win followed two World Championship titles in 2013 and 2014, and European gold in 2015.

Chatham's Kat Driscoll, who learnt her trade at Lordswood Leisure centre and Jumpers Trampoline Club in Gillingham, was delighted with a sixth-placed finish in her trampolining event but one of the big success stories was the women's hockey team.

While their male counterparts bowed out before the quarter-finals, the girls roared their way to the final, where they defied the odds to beat the Netherlands and clinch gold.

Kent's Susannah Townsend, Sam Quek, Nicola White, Shona McCallin and Maddie Hinch were all part of the squad who claimed glory and subsequently



STARS: Racer Shane Byrne (main picture), and sprinter Dina Asher-Smith, coach Jimmy Adams and hockey star Maddie Hinch (below)

We take a look back at the best of sport in Kent...

2016 Review: Part Two...

went on to win further awards of recognition throughout the year.

On the track, before proposing to his boyfriend on Copacabana beach, Sevenoaks' Tom Bosworth achieved a personal best in the race walking, finishing sixth with a time of 1:20:13.

Maidstone's Jack Green, meanwhile, matched his performance in London in 2012 by reaching the semi-finals of the 400m hurdles.

Dina Asher-Smith, from Orpington, was one of the county's medal hopes going into the Games, having become Britain's fastest teenager at the World Championships in Beijing last year.

After qualifying for the 200m final, the sprinter fell short of a place on the podium, but was happy after record-

ing a season's best, finishing fifth in a time of 22.31 seconds.

She got her medal days later, however, as Team GB claimed bronze in the women's 4x100m relay.

Gemili, unquestionably one of the brightest talents in the sport, was denied a medal by the smallest of margins after being beaten to bronze by an incredible three thousandths of a second in the 200m final, ultimately won by Usain Bolt.

"I am really gutted, it is probably the worst way to go out when you finish in fourth," he admitted after the race.

Perhaps Kent's biggest Paralympic hero was table tennis star Will Bayley from Tunbridge Wells, who took a gold medal in the final in September,

memorably celebrating on top of the table.

Of course there was plenty going on in the back end of 2016 besides the Olympics in the county.

Former England bowler James Tredwell was given a benefit year by Kent, who came agonisingly close to promotion but ended up finishing second in Division Two behind Essex.

Typically, any other year, it would have been enough for promotion, but the ECB had announced before the start of the season a revamp of the county championship system, meaning only one team would go up in 2016.

A row rumbled on for the remainder of the year, with chairman George Kennedy saying it was "embarrass-

ing", "plumb wrong" and "against the spirit of cricket" after the ECB chose Hampshire "arbitrarily" as the beneficiaries of Durham's demotion from Division One, rather than Kent.

Head coach Jimmy Adams also left the club in October after five years in the job, which he described as "a great learning experience".

Legendary player and former England captain Charlotte Edwards also departed the county at the start of December.

In football, Gillingham made wholesale changes in the summer and brought in players with Premier League experience including ex-Liverpool and West Ham full-back Paul Konchesky and one-time Arsenal forward, Jay Emmanuel-Thomas.

Their best bit of business, however, was perhaps convincing star man Bradley Dack, voted League One's player of the season back in the spring, to remain at Priestfield.

The Gills endured a difficult start to their league campaign and while excitement built over a glamour EFL Cup tie with Tottenham Hotspur, Justin Edinburgh's side were given a harsh dose of reality as Spurs thrashed them 5-0 at White Hart Lane.

There was more cup heartbreak later in the year when the Gills were knocked out of the FA Cup by non-league Brackley Town for the second time in three years, shortly after Kent's other representatives were also dumped out of the competition before the second round.

Elsewhere, Margate boss Nikki Bull revealed the dire state of the club's finances as chairman John Webb stepped down after just months in the role, while work was completed on Ebbsfleet United's new £5m stand at Stonebridge Road.

Dartford goalkeeper Derren Ibrahim made his international debut for Gibraltar - but conceded the fastest ever World Cup qualifying goal in the process as Belgium's Christian Benteke scored after just 8.1 seconds to set up a comfortable 6-0 win.

In other news, World Cup winners Lawrence Dallaglio and Mike Tindall visited Maidstone Rugby Club, Willderne Golf Club in Sevenoaks hosted Regional Qualifying for Open Championship and international handball rolled into Medway Park.

Meanwhile, West Kingsdown's Lizzy Yarnold threatened to boycott February's world championships in Sochi due to ongoing concerns over state-sponsored doping.

"I don't want to compete at an event where there are not clean athletes and questions over what is going to happen to my doping samples - we need to find out more but if nothing changes then I wouldn't rule out not competing," she said.

One of the success stories of 2016 was the continued dominance of Sheppey's Shane 'Shakey' Byrne, who clinched his fifth British Superbike title at Brands Hatch.

Shakey told us he was "enjoying my racing more than ever" shortly before signing up to two more years of the championship aged 39.

The year ended with Gravesend's Josh Payne making his World Darts Championship debut at Alexandra Palace, but was beaten in the first round by Terry Jenkins.



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Sport Shorts please email sports@kosmedia.co.uk or call Jamie Weir on 01233 653481

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